

Total Depravity

Scripture

- “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” (John 6:44a)
- “For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.” (Romans 8:7)
- “The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14)
- “And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)
- “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Heidelberg Catechism

- 3.Q. From where do you know your sins and misery?
A. From the law of God.
- 4. Q. What does God’s law require of us?
A. Christ teaches us this in a summary in Matthew 22: You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.
- 5. Q. Can you keep all this perfectly?
A. No, I am inclined by nature to hate God and my neighbour.
- 8. Q. But are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any good and inclined to all evil?
A. Yes, unless we are regenerated by the Spirit of God.


Canons of Dort, The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine

- Article 3: Total Inability
 - Therefore, all people are conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, or even to dispose themselves to such reform.
- Article 4: The Inadequacy of the Light of Nature
 - There is, to be sure, a certain light of nature remaining in man after the fall, by virtue of which he retains some notions about God, natural things, and the difference between what is moral and immoral, and demonstrates a certain eagerness for virtue and for good outward behavior. But this light of nature is far from enabling man to come to a saving knowledge of God and conversion to him—so far, in fact, that man does not use it rightly even in matters of nature and society. Instead, in various ways he completely distorts this light, whatever its precise character, and suppresses it in unrighteousness. In doing so he renders himself without excuse before God.

Westminster Larger Catechism

- Q. 24. What is sin?
A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.
- Q. 25. Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?
A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam’s first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called *original sin*, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

Depravity



1. NO DEPRAVITY	2. PARTIAL DEPRAVITY	3. HYPOTHETICAL DEPRAVITY	4. TOTAL DEPRAVITY	5. UTTER DEPRAVITY
Pelagianism	Semipelagianism	Arminianism & Roman Catholicism	Calvinism	Straw man
From 5 th -c. British monk Pelagius. We can save ourselves without God's grace. Condemned at the Council of Ephesus (431).	We need God's grace, but we take the first step toward salvation. We still have a spark of goodness in us. Condemned in the West at the Second Synod of Orange (529).	We <i>would</i> be unable to choose salvation, but God gives everyone <u>prevenient grace</u> , enabling them to accept or reject the gospel. Taught by the Council of Trent (1545-63) and Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609).	We are by nature hostile to God and unable to choose salvation. Even our good deeds are tainted by sin and cannot merit God's approval. Taught at the Synod of Dort (1619).	Unbelievers indulge in every kind of sin all the time, have no conscience, and are incapable of performing deeds that are good and helpful in the sight of others..

"All parts of the soul were possessed by sin.... The whole man is overwhelmed—as by a deluge—from head to foot, so that no part is immune from sin and all that proceeds from him is imputed to sin."

—John Calvin, *Institutes* 2.1.9.

"Because of the bondage of sin by which the will is held bound, it cannot move toward good, much less apply itself thereto; for a movement of this sort is the beginning of conversion to God, which in Scripture is ascribed entirely to God's grace."

—John Calvin, *Institutes* 2.3.5.

"For allowing that all souls of men are dead in sin by nature, this excuses none, seeing that there is no man that is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God. No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called 'natural conscience.' But this is not natural; it is more properly termed 'preventing grace.'"

—John Wesley, "On Working Out Our Own Salvation" (Sermon, 1785).

"...Arminians do affirm total depravity as the natural state of human beings. What would they [Calvinists] think of a person who said of a man who is legally blind but with special glasses can see a little bit that he is only 'hypothetically blind'? ... Or what would they think of a person who said of a woman who is deaf but with special hearing aids can hear a little that she is only 'hypothetically deaf'? ... The moral ability to respond to the gospel freely—by the graciously freed will—is a free gift of God through Christ to all people in some measure."

—Arminian author Roger Olson, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities*, 154-155.